



Iowa Department of Public Health Advancing Health Through the Generations

Thomas J. Vilsack
Governor

Sally J. Pederson
Lt. Governor

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Director

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Dear Government Oversight Committee Members,

Thank you for the opportunity to speak to your committee last week about Iowa's public health emergency preparedness. In only four years, the Iowa Department of Public Health (IDPH) has and continues to make significant progress in emergency preparedness. Planning a pandemic influenza response is not new for the state of Iowa; in fact, the state has been working on the annex for many months. A draft of Iowa's Pandemic Influenza Response Plan Annex and Executive Summary is available at www.cste.org/specialprojects/Influenzaplans/StateMap.asp.

The public has an important role in emergency response and many efforts are being extended to educate Iowans about public health emergencies. One example is the IDPH sponsored **Protect Iowa Health** public education campaign. **Protect Iowa Health** educates Iowans about the importance of preparing for the unexpected as well as the role of public health in an emergency. Nearly 75,000 Iowans have received a copy of the personal preparedness guidebook, "Iowa Guide to Keeping You Safe" with 50,000 more guides being distributed this spring. More **Protect Iowa Health** information can be found at www.protectiowahealth.org. IDPH is also working with two of its media partners to help Iowans understand seasonal flu, pandemic flu and avian flu. A newspaper ad is scheduled to run statewide over the next week about the types of flu Iowans keep hearing about in the news. Select radio stations will run ads promoting the newspaper's ad and stories. IDPH has also expanded the department's seasonal flu and pandemic influenza website, www.idph.state.ia.us/adper/flu.asp.

Nicole Peckumn serves as the department's bioterrorism risk communication officer. If you have questions or comments about the public information activities mentioned above or have communities seeking more information, please contact her at 242-5524 or npeckumn@idph.state.ia.us.

As I stated last week, we have made significant progress, but being prepared requires on-going work and sustainability. IDPH is committed to protecting the health of Iowans and will continue to work with our emergency response partners and the public on public health emergency preparedness and response.

Please contact me at 281-4355 or mjones@idph.state.ia.us with any questions.

Sincerely,

Mary Jones

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Iowa Department of Public Health